



# USC | School of Social Work

## Social Work Research

SOWK 562

Section #67046 | Section #67047

3 Units

*Fall 2015*

*August 3 – November 22 Cohort*

### SYLLABUS



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**Course Location:** VAC  
**Course Day:** Wednesday  
**Course Times:** Section #67046 4:00 – 5:15 pm (PST)  
Section #67047 5:45 – 7:00 pm (PST)  
**Course Folder:** [https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B1GjHISCp\\_h25fnl6VGxXc3VUbUY1ZHN4WGxEMzVudE16ZGxtD2EzMmJnOGZaeXptVzNHek0&usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B1GjHISCp_h25fnl6VGxXc3VUbUY1ZHN4WGxEMzVudE16ZGxtD2EzMmJnOGZaeXptVzNHek0&usp=sharing)

**NOTE:** It is School of Social Work Policy that instructors and students use their @usc.edu email address for school-related email communications.

#### **I. COURSE PREREQUISITES**

None

## **II. CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION**

Introduction to research methods, including conceptualization of research problems, literature review, research design, sampling, measurement, data collection and data analysis.

## **III. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This foundation course is designed to provide an introduction to research methods and to produce an appreciation of the research process. It will explore general issues related to the conduct of social work research as applied to social work practice and service delivery in complex, urban environments as well as program evaluation, and policy development.

In this course, students will review the characteristics and logical processes of social work research and understand the applicability of scientific and scholarly inquiry in advancing professional knowledge and improving social work practice to diverse clientele in numerous settings. Students will gain a conceptual and operational understanding of the various quantitative and qualitative methodologies used in the conduct of social work related research. Students will be prepared to participate in a range of research activities including (a) conceptualization of research problems; (b) review of the literature; (c) evaluation of research design; (d) sampling; (e) selection of measurement tools; (f) data collection; (g) interpretation of data analyses and (h) ethical considerations in the conduct of research with human participants. Attention will also focus on how racial, ethnic, gender, and lifestyle issues impact each stage of the research process.

Students are not expected to carry out an actual study; however, they will complete a series of assignments intended to help prepare them to utilize research as professional social workers. Students are coached to achieve a level of disciplined conceptual and analytical thinking in the process of developing their assignments and critiquing existing empirical literature.

## **IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. Teach basic research principles and concepts within the framework of ethical practice of professional social work. Identify the ethical issues involved in professional social work research, including informed consent, confidentiality, use and abuse of sensitive data, the issue of withholding treatment to control groups, and the honest disclosure of findings.
2. Provide opportunities for students to increase awareness of and be sensitive to issues in the research process as they relate to various diverse populations such as gender, race, sexual orientation, social class, religion, and vulnerable and oppressed groups.

3. Teach and demonstrate the importance of the role of social work empirical research and evidence-based practice research as they apply to social work practice and policy. The principles of evidence-based practice research will be presented and students will have opportunity to apply the principles to evidence search, review of the literature, evidence appraisal and assessing the strengths and limitations of published research, and implementation of evidence in the context of individuals, groups or communities.
4. Present foundation-level research concepts and build student skills including the use research terms and vocabulary, the skill of identifying relevant social work research questions and hypotheses, identifying independent, dependent and other variables, the measurement of variables including describing the concepts of reliability and validity, methods for sample selection, the exploration of research design options and key foundation-level statistical concepts including descriptive and inferential statistics.

## V. COURSE FORMAT / INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

The primary format and instructional methods that will be used in class is critical discussion, interaction, and transaction among the instructor and students in small and large group formats. Other methods include didactic presentation by the instructor and students, and self-reflection. Please note that it may be necessary for the instructor to adjust the syllabus and/or course during the semester.

### Instructor's Oath

*"As your instructor, to each of you, I pledge the following:*

- *To appreciate you, your time and your effort;*
- *To be available and responsible;*
- *To be encouraging and supportive;*
- *To be objective and fair;*
- *To be prompt and timely;*
- *To be respectful, professional and appropriate;*
- *To accommodate when appropriate and within reason;*
- *To try to be an engaging and effective instructor; and*
- *To strive for excellence in carrying out my responsibilities as an instructor as described in the USC Faculty Handbook, Section 3-B (2) (see [http://policies.usc.edu/p4acad\\_stud/facultyhandbook.pdf](http://policies.usc.edu/p4acad_stud/facultyhandbook.pdf)).*

*If at any time you feel I have not honored this oath, please contact me so that I am aware of your concerns and have an opportunity to address them."*

## VI. STUDENT COMPETENCIES & LEARNING OUTCOMES

Student learning for this course relates to one or more of the following foundation-year core social work competencies. Further, competencies relate to one or more course objective, as presented in the following table.

Competencies		SWK 562	Course Objective
1	Professional Identity		
<b>2</b>	<b>Ethical Practice</b>	*	<b>1</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Critical Thinking</b>	*	<b>3 - 4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Diversity in Practice</b>	*	<b>2</b>
5	Human Rights & Justice		
<b>6</b>	<b>Research Based Practice</b>	*	<b>3 - 4</b>
7	Human Behavior		
8	Policy Practice		
9	Practice Contexts		
10	Engage, Assess, Intervene, Evaluate		

\* Indicates core competencies highlighted in this course

The table on the next page presents the core competencies for the course, along with the values, knowledge and/or skills that comprise the competencies. The table also presents corresponding learning outcomes and methods for assessing whether the outcomes have been achieved.

Competencies <i>Knowledge, Values and/or Skills</i>	Student Learning Outcomes	Methods of Assessment
<p><b>ETHICAL PRACTICE</b> — Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.</p> <p>Social workers competent in Ethical Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fulfill their obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making.</li> <li>▪ Are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law.</li> </ul>	<p>1. Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to identify ethical issues that are present in research contexts and be able to discuss strategies that could be used to address ethical concerns.</p> <p>Standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, Belmont Principles, and Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines will serve as frameworks for considering ethical issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Exams</li> <li>– Final Assessment Exam</li> </ul>
<p><b>CRITICAL THINKING</b> — Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.</p> <p>Social workers competent in Critical Thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment.</li> <li>▪ Use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity.</li> <li>▪ Understand that critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information.</li> </ul>	<p>2. Locate, distinguish, and appraise, multiple sources of knowledge that inform understanding of any social work research, practice, or policy question, informed by research based-knowledge and practice wisdom.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Portfolio Assignments</li> </ul>
	<p>3. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication by accurately and consistently utilizing foundation-level research terms in both speaking and writing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Portfolio Assignments</li> <li>– Exams</li> <li>– Final Assessment Exam</li> <li>– Class participation</li> </ul>

Competencies <i>Knowledge, Values and/or Skills</i>	Student Learning Outcomes	Methods of Assessment
	4. Identify key elements, interpret, and describe the meaning of results presented in research tables utilizing foundation-level statistical concepts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exams</li> <li>- Final Assessment Exam</li> </ul>
<p><b>DIVERSITY IN PRACTICE</b> — Engage diversity and difference in practice.</p> <p>Social workers competent in Diversity in Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity.</li> <li>▪ Recognize that the dimensions of diversity reflect intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.</li> <li>▪ Appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim.</li> </ul>	5. Utilize an understanding of the fact that culture can shape the power structures faced by individuals and groups, and articulate and promote attention to issues in the research process as they relate to diverse populations, such as racial and ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, women, and a range of other groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Portfolio Assignments</li> <li>- Exams</li> <li>- Final Assessment Exam</li> </ul>
<p><b>RESEARCH BASED PRACTICE</b> — Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.</p> <p>Social workers competent in</p>	6. Articulate, orally and in writing, reasoned and relevant conclusions based on research findings that can inform practice, policy, and/or further research. This	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Portfolio Assignments</li> <li>- Final Assessment Exam</li> </ul>

Competencies <i>Knowledge, Values and/or Skills</i>	Student Learning Outcomes	Methods of Assessment
<p>Research Based Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery.</li> <li>▪ Comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge.</li> </ul>	<p>includes the ability to describe the relevance of research to the discipline of social work.</p> <hr/> <p>7. Identify and accurately describe the purpose of foundation-level research concepts and techniques utilized in published research. This includes the ability to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify research questions and related hypotheses.</li> <li>b. Identify independent and dependent variables and describe how the concepts of reliability and validity affect the measurement strategies chosen.</li> <li>c. Identify and describe other foundation-level research techniques used in research such as methods for sample selection and research design options.</li> </ol>	<p>– Exams – Final Assessment Exam</p>

## VII. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS, DUE DATES & PERCENT OF FINAL GRADE

### Assignments

Assignments for the course include (a) three “portfolio” assignments, (b) 2 exams, (c) 1 Final Assessment Exam, and (d) “class participation.” All assignments are designed to relate to and build on one another. As such, it is imperative that you complete the assignments by their due dates. **Written assignments should be submitted by midnight on the specified due date.**

Maximum points for each assignment correspond with the percent of the final grade for that assignment. For example, a maximum of 10 points can be earned for an assignment comprising 10% of the final grade.

The table below presents all course assignments, due dates, and the percent of the final grade comprised of by each assignment.

Assignment	Date Due	% of Final Grade
<b>Research Based Practice Portfolio (50% Total)</b>		
Assignment 1 – Topic & Problem Specification	Week 4 - Aug 19	10%
Assignment 2 – Preliminary Research Methods	Week 10 – Oct 7	20%
Assignment 3 – Integrated Research Proposal	Week 14 – Nov 4	20%
<b>Exams (20% Total)</b>		
Exam 1	Week 6 – Sep 9	10%
Exam 2	Week 12 – Oct 21	10%
<b>Final Assessment Exam</b>	Nov 18	20%
<b>Active and Proactive Learning, &amp; Meaningful Class Participation</b>	Ongoing	10%

### ***Research Based Portfolio Assignments (50 Points of Course Grade)***

Much of the work for this course revolves around the completion of a “Research Based Practice Portfolio.” The Portfolio consists of three interconnected assignments. The first two assignments provide the content for the third assignment, which is a hypothetical research proposal. The Portfolio is designed to allow students to apply course content to a practice area of their interest, in line with the School’s “research clusters.” This approach is intended to help students by providing them with parameters for their topics. Additionally, the approach is designed to expose students to School of Social Work faculty, research activity, and resources available to students during the course, throughout their time in the MSW program, and beyond graduation. Finally, the Portfolio approach allows students to receive ongoing and detailed feedback from their instructors—feedback that is tailored around students’ own topics and in response to students’ individual knowledge and skill levels. Students can use this feedback to shape and refine both their learning and portfolio assignments.

Due to the nature of the portfolio, as well as the number and timing of assignments, late assignments will not be accepted for credit. However, time permitting and at the discretion of the instructor, students may submit assignments after the due date in order to receive general feedback about their work.

Assignment 1 is due by the end of the day on Week 4 (August 19). Assignment 2 is due by the end of the day on Week 10 (October 7). Assignment 3 is due by the end of the day on Week 14 (November 4).

Additional details about the portfolio and each assignment will be provided by the instructor and/or posted in our Google Drive folder:



<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B1GjHISCph25fnI6VGxXc3VUubUY1ZHN4WGxEMzVudE16ZGxtD2EzMmJnOGZaeXptVzNHek0&usp=sharing>

### ***Exams (20 points of Course Grade)***

There will be two comprehensive, in-class exams (held during live sessions), comprising a total of 20 points of your final course grade. The exams will consist of multiple choice, true/false, short answer and vignette-based items. Exams cover content presented in course readings, presentations, assignments and activities, supplementary materials, and discussions.

Exam 1 (10 points) will be Week 9 (September 9). Exam 2 (10 points) will be Week 12 (October 21).

### ***Final Assessment Exam (20 points of Course Grade)***

Students will complete a final, comprehensive exam designed to measure their ability to apply the knowledge acquired during the course. The exam will be administered in class on Wednesday, November 18.

### ***Active and Proactive Learning, & Meaningful Class Participation (10 points of Course Grade)***

Students are expected to be active participants in their learning and proactive. This will require mental, physical and perhaps emotional effort from students, both inside and outside the formal classroom. **Active learning** involves assuming responsibility for learning; completing required readings and assignments prior to class; and coming to class with thoughtful comments, reflections or questions about concepts, readings and assignments. **Proactive learning** involves anticipating workload and challenges, and taking the initiative to reach out to the instructor when concerned about possible challenges in the class. It also involves regular communication with the instructor about the course and my performance as the instructor.

Along with active and proactive learning, students are expected to participate meaningfully in class and to contribute to the development of a positive learning environment. **Meaningful participation** consists of thoughtful and respectful participation based on having completed required readings and assignments prior to class. For our purposes, “contributing to the development of a positive learning environment” refers to the extent to which students participate in or help create an environment that is open, professional, engaging, fun, challenging, supportive, and effective. “Environment” refers to our physical classroom, small group settings, other settings in which learning or teaching might occur, and the overall climate and culture of our class.

Please refer to the rubric below for the criteria that will be used to determine your participation grade. For each of five criteria, 0 to 2 points can be earned, for a maximum of 10 points.

Criteria	Never or Rarely	Somewhat	Often or Always
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	Regularly		
• Student demonstrates active and proactive learning.	0	1	2
• Student communicates with the instructor about (a) the course, (b) her or his performance in the course, and (c) the instructor's performance in the course.	0	1	2
• Student's communication, behavior, and participation are respectful, professional, and appropriate (this includes appropriate use of laptops and mobile devices during class).	0	1	2
• Student participates in class in a meaningful way and helps to maintain a positive learning environment.	0	1	2
• Student helps to create a positive learning environment.	0	1	2

Additional details and guidelines for each of the portfolio assignments will be provided by the instructor and discussed in class.

### Grading

Class grades will be based on the following:

Class Grades		Final Grade	
3.85 – 4	A	93 – 100	A
3.60 – 3.84	A-	90 – 92	A-
3.25 – 3.59	B+	87 – 89	B+
2.90 – 3.24	B	83 – 86	B
2.60 – 2.89	B-	80 – 82	B-
2.25 – 2.59	C+	77 – 79	C+
1.90 – 2.24	C	73 – 76	C
		70 – 72	C-

Within the School of Social Work, grades are determined in each class based on the following standards which have been established by the faculty of the School: (1) grades of A or A- are reserved for student work which not only demonstrates very good mastery of content but which also shows that the student has undertaken a complex task, has applied critical thinking skills to the assignment, and/or has demonstrated creativity in her or his approach to the assignment. The difference between these two grades is determined by the degree to which these skills have been demonstrated by the student; (2) a grade of B+ is given to work which is judged to be very good—this grade denotes that a student has demonstrated a more-than competent understanding of the material being tested in the assignment; (3) a grade of B is given to student work which meets the basic requirements of the assignment—it denotes that the student has

done adequate work on the assignment and meets basic course expectations; (4) a grade of B- denotes that a student's performance was less than adequate on an assignment, reflecting only moderate grasp of content and/or expectations; (5) a grade of C reflects a minimal grasp of the assignments, poor organization of ideas and/or several significant areas requiring improvement; (6) grades between C- and F are applied to denote a failure to meet minimum standards, reflecting serious deficiencies in all aspects of a student's performance on the assignment.

### VIII. REQUIRED AND SUPPLEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS & RESOURCES

#### Required Textbooks

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2016). *Essential research methods for social work, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning. <[Control click here to purchase or rent a hard or electronic copy from Cengage Learning](#)>.

OR

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2013, 2011). *Essential research methods for social work, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning.

#### Guides for APA Style Formatting

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

APA formatting and style guide. (1995-2011). The OWL at Purdue. Retrieved from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/> (Instructor Note: Note: this popular site for students—it is free, has switched to 6<sup>th</sup> edition.)

USC Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism. Available at <http://libguides.usc.edu/content.php?pid=83009&sid=616087>

Winn, J. (2010). APA style: USC Lib Guides. Available at <http://libguides.usc.edu/content.php?pid=26798&sid=639172> (Instructor Note: HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.)

#### Recommended Websites

Course Folder: All materials for this course can be found in a Course Folder stored on Google Drive. To access the folder, click or past into your browser the following link:  
<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B1GjHISCph25fnl6VGxXc3VUbUY1ZHN4WGxEMzVudE16ZGxt2EzZMmJnOGZaeXptVzNHek0&usp=sharing>

National Associate of Social Workers. Available at <http://www.naswdc.org>

National Guideline Clearinghouse™ (NGC). Available at <http://www.guideline.gov> [A public resource for evidence-based clinical practice guidelines]. The elements of

style—A rule book for writing. Available at <http://www.bartleby.com/141/>. [You can read it online]

FQS: Forum qualitative research—An online journal of qualitative research. Available at <http://www.qualitative-research.net>

Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research. Available at <http://www.iaswresearch.org>

Society for Social Work Research. Available at <http://www.sswr.org>

American Evaluation Association. Available at <http://www.eval.org>

**Note:** Additional required and recommended readings may be assigned by the instructor throughout the course.

## **IX. ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students are expected to attend every real time virtual class and to remain for the duration of the class. Failure to attend class or arriving late may impact your ability to achieve course objectives which could affect your course grade. Students are expected to notify the instructor by email ([devon.brooks@usc.edu](mailto:devon.brooks@usc.edu)) of any anticipated absence or reason for tardiness.

University of Southern California policy permits students to be excused from class for the observance of religious holy days. This policy also covers scheduled final examinations which conflict with students' observance of a holy day. Students must make arrangements *in advance* to complete class work that will be missed, or to reschedule an examination, due to holy days observance.

Please refer to *Scampus* and to the USC School of Social Work Student Handbook for additional information on attendance policies.

## **X. STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

Additionally, it should be noted that violations of academic integrity are not only violations of USC principles and policies, but also violations of the values of the social work profession.

#### **XI. STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. *Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructor as early in the semester as possible.* DSP is located in STU 301 and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Students from all academic centers (including the Virtual Academic Center) may contact Ed Roth, Director of the DSP office at 213-740-0776 or [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

#### **XII. EMERGENCY RESPONSE INFORMATION**

**Note:** The following Emergency Response Information pertains to students on campus, but please note its importance should you be on campus for a temporary or extended period. When not on campus: Call the 911 listing in your local community for any emergency.

To receive information, call the main number (213) 740-2711, press #2. “For recorded announcements, events, emergency communications or critical incident information.”

To leave a message, call (213) 740-8311

For additional university information, please call (213) 740-9233

Or visit university website: <http://emergency.usc.edu>

If it becomes necessary to evacuate the building, please go to the following locations carefully and using stairwells only. Never use elevators in an emergency evacuation.

Students may also sign up for a USC Trojans Alert account to receive alerts and emergency notifications on their cell phone, pager, PDA, or e-mail account. Register at <https://trojansalert.usc.edu>.

#### **XIII. STATEMENT ABOUT INCOMPLETES**

The Grade of Incomplete (IN) can be assigned only if there is work not completed because of a documented illness or some other emergency occurring after the 12th week of the semester. Students must NOT assume that the instructor will agree to the grade of IN. Removal of the grade of IN must be instituted by the student and agreed to be the instructor and reported on the official “Incomplete Completion Form.”

#### **XIV. POLICY ON LATE OR MAKE-UP WORK**

Assignments are due on the day and time specified. Late assignments may be accepted by the instructor for review and feedback at the instructor's discretion, but they will not be graded.

#### **XV. POLICY ON CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS AND/OR COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

It may be necessary to make some adjustments in the syllabus and/or course during the semester in order to respond to unforeseen or extenuating circumstances. Any such adjustments would be made for the express purpose of accommodating students and with input from students. Adjustments that are made will be communicated to students both verbally and in writing.

#### **XVI. CODE OF ETHICS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS**

*Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 2008 NASW Delegate Assembly [<http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/Code/code.asp>]*

##### **Preamble**

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human wellbeing and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual wellbeing in a social context and the wellbeing of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. "Clients" is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective:

- Service
- Social justice
- Dignity and worth of the person
- Importance of human relationships
- Integrity
- Competence

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.

## **XVII. COMPLAINTS**

If you have a complaint or concern about the course or the instructor, please discuss it first with the instructor. If you feel you cannot discuss it with the instructor, contact the SOWK 562 VAC Faculty Lead Instructor, Dr. Marcia Wilson, at [mrwilson@usc.edu](mailto:mrwilson@usc.edu) or the Research Course Chair, Dr. Alice Cepeda, at [alicecep@usc.edu](mailto:alicecep@usc.edu). If you do not receive a satisfactory response or solution, contact your academic advisor.

## **XVIII. TIPS FOR MAXIMIZING YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN THIS COURSE**

- ✓ Be proactive! TOGETHER, let's do everything we can to make this an educational and enjoyable experience for you. Try to anticipate issues that could present challenges and PLEASE REACH OUT TO ME so that we can problem-solve before rather than after the fact.
- ✓ Be mindful of getting proper nutrition, exercise, rest and sleep!
- ✓ Complete required readings and assignments before coming to class.
- ✓ Keep up with the assigned readings and assignments. Don't procrastinate!!
- ✓ Come to class and participate in an active, respectful and meaningful way.
- ✓ Come to class prepared to ask any questions you might have. If you don't understand something, ask questions! Ask questions in class, during office hours, and/or through email!
- ✓ Stay offline while in class.
- ✓ Form study groups with other students in the class.
- ✓ Take advantage of office hours. Contact me if you are concerned about or struggling in class. You will be given priority during office hours if you schedule an appointment ahead of time.
- ✓ If necessary to receive support from a tutor, please inform or involve me. I want to be able to help and support you in any way possible, but I need to know that you want/need support!! I am also happy to meet with you and your tutor.



### Course Details

Date	Topics	Required Textbook Chapters	Required Online Units	Due
Week 1 Aug 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Course Introduction and Overview</li> <li>■ Why Study Research               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The Scientific Method</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Evidence-Based Practice</li> <li>■ Preliminary Topic Areas and School of Social Work Research Clusters</li> </ul>	Chapter 1	Course Overview & Unit 1	
Week 2 Aug 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Types of Social Work Research               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Quantitative, Qualitative &amp; Mixed Methods of Inquiry</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Factors Influence the Research Process               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Research Purposes</li> <li>➤ Other Purposes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Chapters 3 - 4	Unit 2	
Week 3 Aug 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ethical &amp; Cultural Issues</li> <li>■ Culturally Competent Research</li> <li>■ Problem Formulation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Selecting a Topic</li> <li>➤ Reviewing the Literature</li> <li>➤ Formulating a Question</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Conceptualization</li> </ul>	Chapter 7	Unit 3	
Week 4 Aug 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Measurement Methods               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Reliability and Validity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Chapter 8	Unit 4	<b>ASSIGNMENT 1</b>
Week 5 Sep 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Instruments</li> <li>■ Surveys</li> </ul>	Chapters 9 - 10	Unit 5	
Week 6 Sep 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Participants</li> <li>■ Subject Methods</li> </ul>		Unit 6	<b>EXAM 1</b>
Week 7 Sep 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sampling Methods</li> <li>■ <i>Types of Sampling Methods</i></li> </ul>	Chapter 11		



Date	Topics	Required Textbook Chapters	Required Online Units	Due
Week 8 Sep 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Design Methods</li> <li>■ Inferring Causality</li> <li>■ Internal Validity               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Threats to Internal Validity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Chapter 12	Unit 10	
Week 9 Sep 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Group-based Design Methods               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Pre-experimental Designs</li> <li>▸ Quasi-experimental Designs</li> <li>▸ Experimental Designs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Review Chapter 12	Unit 9	
Week 10 Oct 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Single Case Evaluation Designs</li> </ul>	Chapter 13		<b>Assignment 2</b>
Week 11 Oct 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Program Evaluation</li> <li>■ Other Methodological Approaches</li> </ul>	Chapters 14 - 15		
Week 12 Oct 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Analyzing Available Records</li> </ul>	Chapter 16		<b>EXAM 2</b>
Week 13 Oct 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Quantitative Data Analysis               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Descriptive Statistics</li> <li>▸ Inferential Statistics</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Chapter 17	Units 11 - 13	
Week 14 Nov 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Qualitative Research Methods</li> <li>■ Qualitative Data Analysis</li> </ul>	Chapter 18	Unit 8	<b>ASSIGNMENT 3</b>
Week 15 Nov 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Context Revisited</li> <li>■ Course Wrap Up</li> </ul>	None	Unit 15	
<b>Exam Week Nov 18</b>				<b>FINAL ASSESSMENT EXAM<sup>1</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> Administered during the regularly scheduled class time. Final grades to be submitted by November 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Important Dates**

- August 3 Semester Begins
- August 24 Last Day to Add/Drop without mark of a “W”
- September 7 LABOR DAY- NO CLASS/NO FIELD
- October 29 Last Day to Drop with a mark of a “W”
- November 15 Last Day of Instruction
- November 15-21 Study Days/Finals Week
- November 21 Last Day of Semester
- November 25 Instructor Submits Final Grade